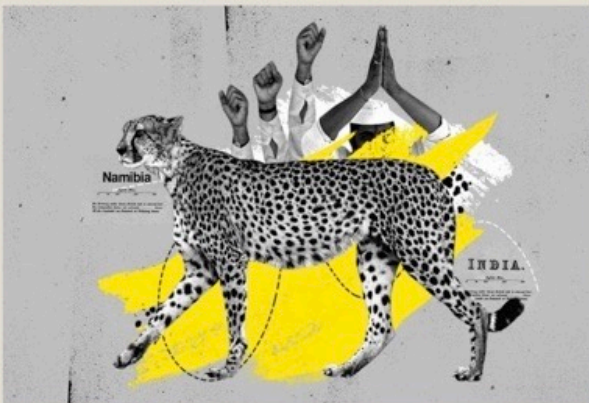


CHEETAH RE-INTRODUCTION

Abstract

About 70 years after the local extinction of the Asiatic Cheetah in India, the Indian government plans to re-introduce them to the grasslands of Rajasthan, by importing them from South Africa. This is being done as a means of boosting eco-tourism in the country, commercialising wildlife to justify conservation, as well as re-populating Indian ecosystems with the big cat species. This case study analyses the pros and cons of this move, its effect on tourism and the economy and its impact on local ecology through this case study, that had its conception in 1970, got revamped in 2020 and is being carried through in 2021. Though this project has potential, its execution seems based more on optimism than practicality, and it seems rather unnecessary at a time when India's native species are struggling to survive



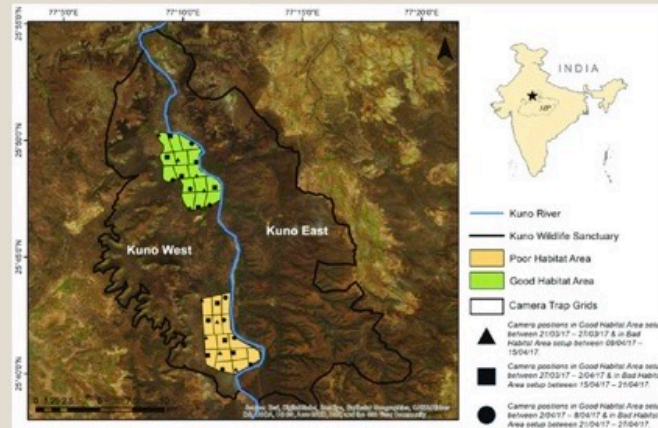
A representation of how the Cheetah re-introduction plans still lay ridden with political gains and agendas, credit : The Swaddle

Stakeholders

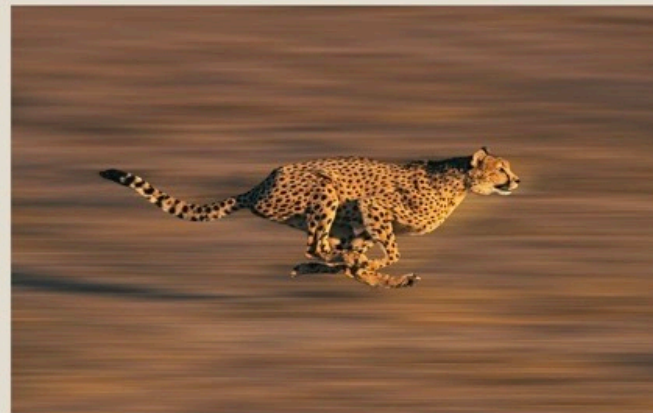
- Government
- Environmentalists
- Locals
- Tourism Industry
- Economists

In class-

For class, the students could role play as different stakeholders and form 2 teams for and against the cheetah re-introduction project, which could then debate on why or why not this project should take place.



Outline of Kuno National Park, credit : researchgate.net



The African Cheetah, Source : Times Of India

References-

- <https://www.gapinterdisciplinaryfiles.org/res/articles/112-16%20IMPACT%20OF%20ECO-TOURISM%20ON%20THE%20INDIAN%20ECONOMY.pdf>
- <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/elephant-in-the-room-human-animal-conflicts-kill-1-401-people-301-jumbos-in-3-years-in-india-78251>
- <https://theswaddle.com/indias-cheetah-reintroduction-plan-is-fraught-with-political-symbolism-short-on-scientific-rigor/>
- <https://journalsofindia.com/kuno-national-park/>

Solution

Given the potential for man-animal conflict, assured displacement of locals, doubts around the feasibility of the African Cheetah in the Indian subcontinent and current poor state of conservation and national parks in India, the re-introduction plan would not be a good project to take up. With tigers, lions and leopards already facing stress due to low land availability and insufficient legal protection, adding a newly introduced African Cheetah to the list would only complicate current conservation tactics.



Timeline of Cheetah numbers in India

Pre-Class-

- In your opinion, should the Indian government relocate the cheetahs?
- Research about Kuno National Park. Do you think the habitat is suitable for the introduction of Cheetahs?
- Do you think the locals will be disadvantaged by the potential increase in man-animal conflict, or do you think they will be advantaged by the increase in tourism expenditure?

Data and Details

- Research shows there were at least 230 cheetahs in the wild between 1799 and 1968. They officially went extinct in 1972
- The Indian Environment Ministry released statistics that revealed that more than 1000 people had died due to man-animal conflict between 2014-17, with several more cases relating to injury and loss of property, crop and livestock.
- Eco-tourism accounts for a sizeable portion of the Indian economy. It adds to about 6.23% to the country's Gross Domestic Product and provides 8.78% of the total employment in India
- The plan would require 169 villages to be displaced
- The cost of this project would be \$18,567,736.
- Kuno is a National park in Madhya Pradesh. It was established, in 1981 with an area of 347 km².